

As I reflect on the videos and readings for 5th week of the Teaching with Technology course, I will say that they gave me pause to consider just how utilizing the best available technology may revolutionize teaching and learning. The Big Thinkers Digital Generation video speakers stretched my imagination farther than I had been willing to let it wander where education is concerned. Let us consider for a moment a time when... high speed broadband is readily available; every teacher and student has equivalent bandwidth at home and school; every student has a computer and , an iPod, a pad, and some sort of student response device, education will be vastly different. The teacher shortage will be a thing of the past because teaching in classrooms as we know them today will no longer be a standard practice. Instead of a teacher ratio of 1 to 22, perhaps, 1 to 222 via the magic of video conferencing, but it will seem like 1:1. It will be up to parents to be at home to provide guidance and ensure homework is turned in or hire a child care professional to do so. Grade levels will not be age dependent, but achievement based, adults and children alike will learn at their own pace. Not only will fewer teachers be required, but fewer everything. With so many available for so few positions, it is likely the American standard of living will drop drastically even as standards in third world countries increase... It is indeed an exciting time to be a teacher, but what types of jobs will our media smart students be rushing headlong to fill? The job scenario of the future: Is it really necessary for a company to pay an employee for an 8 – 5 position in a bricks and mortar office, when they can pay that same or another person far less to do more from wherever and whenever they choose as long as the contracted work is completed as requested and when requested? And because the Big Thinkers influence the political scenario and they forgot that plumbing, carpentry, construction, air conditioning, are technology jobs that require skilled laborers to meet the e infrastructure expansion needs of a growing nation...the infrastructure falls into disrepair....That isn't the kind of warm and fuzzy scenario, I thought I was going to imagine but it is certainly one that I hope the Big Thinkers, the financial analysts, the movers and shakers spend time analyzing in order to contrive a transition into a better American experience.

Moving on to the readings, the 2007 book, *Using technology with classroom instruction that works*, led the reader through the use of effort rubrics and tracking charts as a way to help students learn to make the correlation that their final grades are directly proportional to their effort on homework, projects, and tests. The authors felt this necessary to move all students away from blaming failure on outside factors, by documenting and comparing their efforts over time to their grades. I hate to sound like a pessimist...but I jubilantly shared this with a teacher who was complaining her students just flat don't put any effort into anything....her comment was, "and this will make a difference how?? They won't record their true effort, they will just lie..." That was not the response I had expected... I didn't have an alternative to offer. In self-defense I will move on to the last reading of the course...

According to Harry Tuttle in the 2007 book, *Web 2.0: New Tools, New Schools*, the most promising contribution of web 2.0 tools is their ability to provide instant interactive, accurate, and high quality authentic assessment. Not just low level recognition assessments, but open ended, in depth assessments that accurately gauge the depth and breadth of person's or group's collective knowledge. In fact it is this single element of educational gaming environments that the Big Thinkers seemed to think will drive much of the change to the projected change to our education system. It isn't just the fact that the educational scenarios teach logic, reasoning, and content curriculum, but the fact that the

assessments of skill and knowledge woven into the stories drive student to learn and do more in the game scenario without realizing they are taking a “test.” In a similar way, student’s blogs, wiki creations, collaborative project products speak volumes about a student’s abilities, yet the experience is so engaging they willingly participate and do not realize they have been tested when it’s all over. Their collective works become a testament to their overall knowledge and skill when archived for safe keeping and assessment reviews in the form of an ePortfolio. The ePortfolio becomes a much more accurate evaluation tool when considering grade promotions, job promotions, etc., than a single test on a single day, that may have been a very bad day for the student.

One of the most promising features of web 2.0 tools is their adaptability to provide just what diverse populations of students need, when, where, and how they need it. One of the most challenging features of using web 2.0 tools is determining the appropriate ways to use these tools to address the diverse student populations included in classrooms packed with increasing numbers of students as educational budgets continue to be cut. This course has provided many free tools ranging from simple word processing, to advanced class profilers complete with lesson builder tools to be sure all students needs are met; it has introduced me to learning theories and the research that dictates these tools can help improve student achievement when properly used by talented, well trained teachers using the learning theories as guideposts. I enjoyed the class, but I scared myself daydreaming about where Edutopia could lead.

Resources:

Edutopia.org (nd), Big Thinkers: John Paul Gee on Grading with Games. Retrieved from:
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<http://www.edutopia.org/digital-generation-sasha-barab-video>, Oct. 5, 2009.

YouTube.com (nd). Vision for Technology in K-12 Retrieved from:
<http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=Aho0G5Kf1w4>, Oct. 5, 2009.

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